CLAIMS:

1.   A method (200) for remotely managing a metric (12) adapted for use on a
diagnostic medical modality (21), the diagnostic medical modality (21) responsive to a
software program (38) which, when executed, causes the diagnostic medical modality (21)
to conduct a medical investigation based on the metric (12), the method comprising:
        retrieving (202) via the World Wide Web (18) a metric (12) associated with the
diagnostic medical modality (21);
        verifying (204) the integrity (20) of the metric (12); and
        downloading (206) the metric (12) to the diagnostic medical modality (21).

2.   A computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon one or more software
programs (24) which, when executed, implement the method of claim 1.

3.   The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
based on a request from the diagnostic medical modality, retrieving the metric from the
World Wide Web.

4.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the metric is maintained at a central
location.

5.   The method according to claim 4, wherein the central location is one of:
        a web server (3) responsive to a plurality of diagnostic medical modalities at
multiple geographic locations; and
        a web server (32) responsive to at least one diagnostic medical modality at a single
geographic location.

6.   The method according to claim 5, wherein the step of maintaining the metric further
comprises:
        automatically updating the metric prior to downloading the metric to the diagnostic
medical modality.

7.   The method according to claim 5, wherein the step of downloading the metric further comprises: automatically downloading an updated metric prior to conducting the medical investigation.

8.   The method according to claim 5, wherein maintenance of the metric is separate from maintenance of the software program.

9.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the metric comprises predetermined criteria for performing a medical calculation, the medical calculation comprising an output of the diagnostic medical modality.

10.   A method (300) for conducting a medical investigation using a diagnostic medical modality (21), the diagnostic medical modality (21) responsive to a metric (12), responsive to a software program (38) which, when executed, causes the diagnostic medical modality (21) to conduct the medical investigation based on the metric (12), and responsive to a web server (32, 3), the method comprising:

        requesting (302) the metric (12) from the web server (32, 3);

        based on the request, retrieving (304) the metric (12) from the web server (32, 3) and recognizing the metric (12) on the diagnostic medical modality (21); and

        causing the execution (306) of the software program (38) based on the recognized metric (12).

11.   A computer-readable storage medium (34) having stored thereon one or more software programs which, when executed, implement the method of claim 10.

12.   The method according to claim 10, wherein during the execution of the software program, substantially no interaction occurs between the diagnostic medical modality and the web server (3).

13.   The method according to claim 10, wherein the step of requesting further comprises providing to the web server an identifier associated with the diagnostic medical modality.

14.   The method according to claim 10, wherein the metric comprises predetermined criteria for performing a medical calculation, the medical calculation comprising an output of the diagnostic medical modality.

15.   The method according to claim 14, wherein when the software program is executed, the diagnostic medical modality is caused to make a clinical measurement and, based on the clinical measurement and the metric, the medical calculation is performed and the diagnostic medical modality is caused to output the medical calculation.

16.   The method according to claim 14, wherein when the software program is executed, the software program estimates a value associated with the medical calculation, the value being dependent on both a clinical measurement made by the diagnostic medical modality and the metric.

17.   An apparatus for conducting a medical investigation, comprising:
        a computer-readable storage medium (34), responsive to a diagnostic medical modality (21), for storing a metric (12) automatically downloadable to the diagnostic medical modality (21) from the World Wide Web (18), the metric (12) comprising predetermined criteria for performing a clinical medical calculation in connection with the medical investigation; and
        a processor (36) responsive to the computer-readable storage medium (34) and to a software program (38), the software program (38), when loaded into the processor (36), operative to cause the diagnostic medical modality (21) to conduct the clinical medical calculation based on the metric (12).

18.   A method of providing a service (16) for managing a metric (12) associated with a diagnostic medical modality (21), the method comprising the steps of:
        providing, in a computer-readable storage medium (13), a plurality of metrics (12) associated with a plurality of diagnostic medical modalities (17, 19, 21), the metrics (12) comprising predetermined criteria for performing clinical medical calculations using diagnostic medical modalities (17, 19, 21);
        prior to at least one of the plurality of diagnostic medical modalities (17, 19, 21) performing a clinical medical calculation, causing at least one of the plurality of metrics

(12) to be automatically downloaded to the at least one diagnostic medical modality (21) via the World Wide Web (18); and

causing the at least one diagnostic medical modality (21) to perform the clinical medical calculation based on the downloaded metric (12).